

DICK WHITTINGTON

**RETOLD BY
E. E. ELLSWORTH**

**BLACKIE & SON LIMITED
LONDON AND GLASGOW**

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DICK WHITTINGTON

CHAPTER ONE

Going to London

Once upon a time there was a boy. His name was Dick Whittington. He had no father or mother. He had not even an aunt or uncle. Poor Dick had nobody to love him. He had nobody to get him nice dinners.

Dick had to work hard all day long. But he did not mind working. He used to work at a farm.

One day he went to the farmer. "I am going to London," he said.

"Why do you want to go to London?" asked the farmer.

"I am going to seek my fortune," replied Dick.

"Very well," said the farmer. "I hope you will soon find it."

The next day Dick got up



AWAY HE WENT TO SEEK HIS FORTUNE

very early. The farmer's wife gave him some food. Dick put it in a little bundle. He said good-bye to everyone. Then away he went to seek his fortune.

He felt very happy. He had to walk a long way. But he was a strong boy. He liked walking. The sky was blue. The sun had just got up. It shone on Dick as he marched along.

Soon a man on a wagon passed him. The man had four horses to pull it. He was a kind man. He gave Dick a ride to London.

Very soon they drove through the streets of London. Dick felt so

excited. He had never seen so many streets in his life.

Then the man said: "Well, this is where I have to stop. You can get down now."

Dick jumped down. He thanked the kind man and said good-bye to him. "Good-bye; Dick," said the man. "I hope you will soon get rich."

Dick put the bundle on his back. He walked away to seek his fortune.

There were many strange things to see. There seemed to be so many people, too. He saw fine shops and fine houses. Some of the people wore beautiful clothes.

On and on he walked, looking at everything. At last he began to feel tired. He wondered how he was going to get 'work. Nobody seemed to trouble to look at him. Sometimes he stopped to look in the shops. He wished

he had a lot of money.
He wanted to buy the
pretty things.

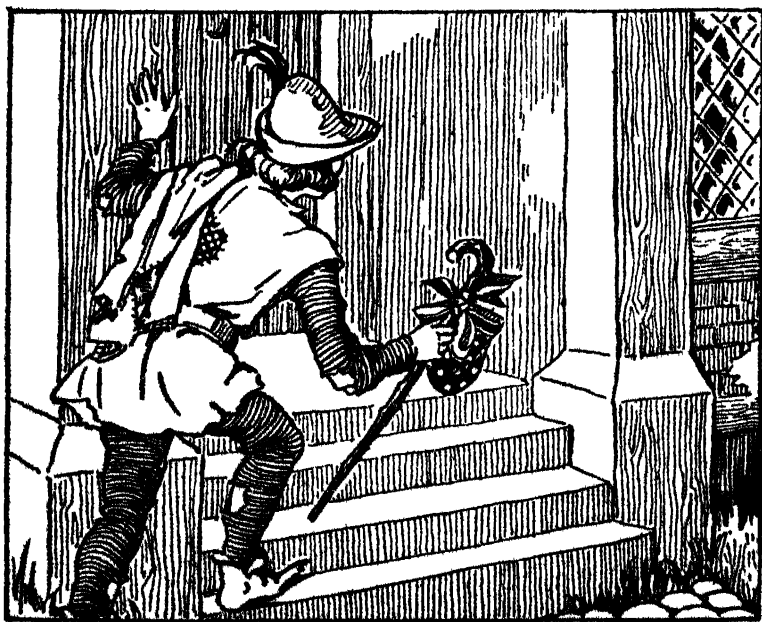
After a time he felt
hungry. He had eaten
most of his food. So he
sat down and ate the rest.
Then away he went once
more.

Up and down the streets
Dick walked. Once or
twice he spoke to people.
He asked them if he could
work for them. But they
said, "No".

It began to get dark.

Poor Dick did not know where to go. He saw a large house. It had a big porch.

“I will sit down inside this porch,” said Dick. “I will have a little rest.”



DICK CREPT INSIDE THE PORCH

He crept inside and sat down. It was warm in the porch. Soon he fell fast asleep.

After a time a gentleman came along. It was his house. He saw Dick asleep in the porch. He took hold of Dick's arm.

"Wake up, little boy," he said. "You must not go to sleep here. Run along to your home. It is very late to be out."

Dick got up and looked at him.

“Please, sir, I have no home,” he said. “I am looking for work. Can you give me some to do? I am a strong boy. I will work very hard.”

The gentleman shook his head.

“I am a merchant,” he said. “I have no work you could do. Besides, you are too young.”

Just then the door opened. A little girl peeped out. She was such a nice little girl.

She looked at Dick in surprise.

“Who is this boy, father?” she asked. “What does he want? Why is he here so late?”

“He is looking for work,” said the merchant. “But I have no work for him.”

“Oh, father,” cried the little girl. “Let him come and work in the kitchen. The cook wants someone to help her. I heard her say so.”

“Would you like to come and work in the kitchen?” asked the gentleman. “There will be plenty to do there.”

“Oh yes, please,” replied Dick. “I should like it very much. I will do anything. I will work hard.”

“Very well,” said the gentleman. “Come along in. I will tell the cook about you.”

“What is your name?” asked the little girl.



THE LITTLE GIRL SMILED AT DICK

“My name is Dick Whittington,” said Dick.

“My name is Alice,” said the little girl. She smiled at Dick very sweetly. Dick thought

she was the prettiest girl he had ever seen.

Dick was very busy. The merchant had a large house. He had many servants to work for him. He had many friends as well. They often came to see him. So the cook was always busy.

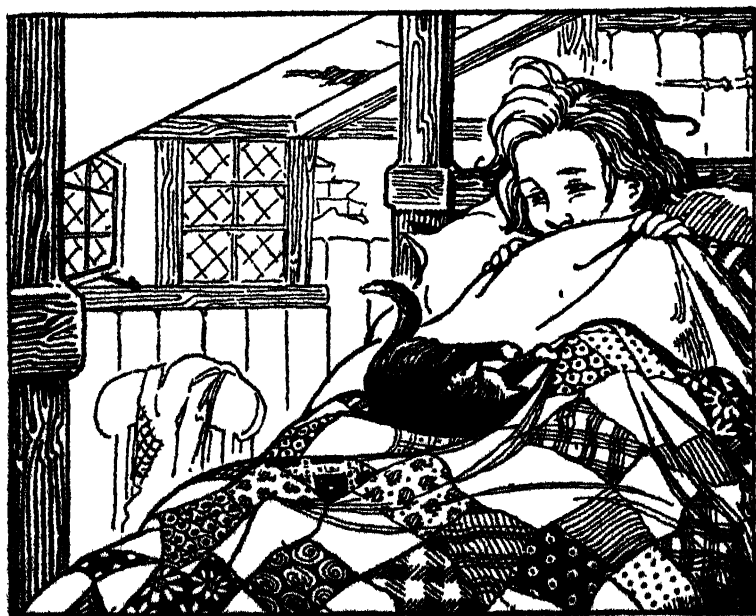
Dick had to get up very early in the morning. But he did not mind that. He was used to getting up early. All day he worked in the kitchen. At night

he used to feel very tired indeed.

His bedroom was an attic. It was at the top of the house. When he went to bed, rats and mice ran about on the floor. Some of them even jumped on his bed. He could not sleep. They made such a noise. He did not like rats and mice on his bed.

“Oh dear, dear!” he cried. “What shall I do? I cannot stay in this room.”

But there was no other room for him. He had to sleep in the attic. But one day he had a nice surprise. Someone gave him a kitten. It was so sweet and playful. Dick



THE KITTEN SLEPT ON DICK'S BED

soon loved it dearly. At night it slept on his bed.

The rats and mice had a surprise, too. The kitten chased after them. Soon Dick could sleep in peace. There were no more rats and mice. Pussy had caught them all.

Dick gave her milk every 'day. He always saved some of his dinner for her. Soon she followed him everywhere. She loved Dick very

much. Dick loved her, too.

He began to feel happier. Sometimes he saw Alice. He liked to look at her. She had such pretty clothes. She had such lovely golden curls. And she was always kind and gentle. Everybody in the house loved little Alice.

CHAPTER TWO

Turn again, Whittington

One day the merchant called his servants.

“My big ship is sailing over the sea,” he said. “She will go to strange lands. You can send a present to the people there. They will be very glad to get something. They will send back a present to you. So bring

your presents to me tomorrow."

The next day the servants were busy. Each found a nice present to send. Then they came to give them to the merchant. But Dick did not come. He had no present to send. So he hid away. He did not want to see the merchant.

"Where is Dick?" asked Alice. "He has not brought his present. Where can he be?"

“Oh, Dick must send a present,” said everyone. So they went to look for Dick. At last they found him. He came upstairs.

“You have not brought your gift,” said the merchant. “Everyone has brought one except you.”

“I have nothing to bring,” said Dick sadly. “I have no money to buy anything nice.”

“Haven’t you anything at all?” asked Alice.

“No, I have nothing,”

replied Dick. "Nothing at all."

"Oh yes, you have," said the cook. "You have a fine clever cat. Why don't you send her?"

"Oh no, no," cried Dick. "I cannot part with my cat. I cannot send her."

Poor Dick was quite upset.

"She is all I have," he said.

But everyone cried, "Do send her, Dick. Do send



"VERY WELL, I WILL SEND HER"

your cat. Send her to the ship."

At last the poor boy said:

"Very well, I will send her. I have nothing else to send."

Not long afterwards the

ship sailed away. On board was Dick Whittington's cat. When his pussy had really gone, Dick felt very sad and lonely. He missed her so much. She had always slept on his bed. Now he was all alone. Every day he missed her more than ever. Every day he became more unhappy.

The cook was such a cross cook. She never praised Dick when he tried to please her.

At last he said to himself:
“ I will run away from
this house. Nobody loves
me. Nobody cares about
me at all. I will go back
to the country. I will
work there. I shall never
get a fortune here.”

The next morning Dick
got up very early.
Nobody was awake. He
crept downstairs. He
opened the door quietly.
Then he sped away, as
fast as he could. It was
so early that nobody was

about. Dick walked along with his bundle on his shoulder.

After a long time he came to some fields. There was a stile close by.

“Ah,” said Dick, “I have come a long way. I feel rather tired. I will sit on this stile and rest.”

He got on the stile. Not far away was a church. It was called Bow Church. The bells of Bow Church were very sweet. They began to



DICK SAT ON THE STILE

play some lovely tunes.
Dick listened to them.

“What lovely bells!” he
cried. “I could listen to
them all day long.”

“Ding dong, ding dong,
ding dong, ding dong,”
rang the bells.

“Ding dong, ding dong, ding dong.”

Over and over again the bells rang the same tune. Then they changed to another tune. This one was quite different. It said: “Ding-ding-dong, ding - ding - dong. Ding, dong, ding, dong-dong.”

“Ah, that is a different tune,” cried Dick. “But I like it just as well.”

He began to listen very carefully. Then he said:

“Why, those bells seem

to talk to me. They say,
‘Turn again, Whittington!’
I wonder what they
mean by that.”

“Ding-ding-dong, ding-
ding-dong,” rang the bells.

Dick jumped down from
the stile.

“There they go!” he
cried. “‘Turn again,
Whittington!’ Yes, that
is just what they say.”

He listened again. The
bells pealed out loudly,
“Ding, dong, ding, dong-
dong.”

“ Lord Mayor of London,” said Dick. “ That is what they are saying. ‘ Turn again, Whittington, Lord Mayor of London!’ ”

“ Well I *will* turn,” he cried. “ I will go back again. I will try very hard. Perhaps one day I shall really be Lord Mayor of London.”

So round he turned and hurried back. He crept quietly in. Nobody had missed him. Nobody was awake yet. He began his

work as soon as he could.

By and by the cook came down. Everything in the kitchen was spick and span. Dick worked harder than ever. Very often the cook was angry. She sometimes beat him. But Dick did not run away again. He thought of the bells.

“ Lord Mayor of London,” he used to whisper to himself. “ I must be brave. I must be willing to work hard. Then per-

haps I shall ride in a beautiful coach. I shall have lovely horses. How wonderful that would be!"

The time went on. Dick still lived at the merchant's house. He often thought about his cat. He wondered where she was. He still missed her very much. Sometimes he wondered if his dear pussy missed him. He did hope that she was happy and well fed.

Whenever he saw Alice



ALICE TALKED TO HIM SOMETIMES

she smiled at him. She talked to him sometimes. That made Dick feel happy.

CHAPTER THREE

The Cat's Journey

Now the sailors on the ship liked pussy, too. She missed Dick at first. But she soon felt quite at home. She grew much bigger. Soon she had caught all the rats on the ship.

Across the wide blue ocean they sailed. Soon they were far away from

England. At last they came to a strange land.

It was an island. The people on the island were not white. They were brown. It was a beautiful island. There were fruit-trees and tall palm trees. Beautiful birds flew about everywhere.

The king and queen of the island were very kind. They invited the captain to dinner with them. He was very pleased to go. So he got into a small



THERE WAS A FINE DINNER READY FOR THEM

boat. Then the sailors rowed away from the ship. Soon they reached the shore. There was a fine dinner all ready for them. There were slaves to wait upon them, too.

The captain sat down beside the king. The slaves brought in the dishes of food. They were just going to begin when something happened. A lot of rats and mice ran out from their holes. They ran all over the food. They began to nibble it.

“Oh dear, dear!” cried the queen. “Here they are again!”

“Isn’t it dreadful?” said the king.

“We can never get a meal in peace. We are always worried by those terrible things. Nobody can get rid of them. We try to catch them. But they are too quick for us. They run away so fast.”

The captain was very surprised.

“Why don’t you get a cat?” he asked.

“A cat!” said the queen.

“A cat!” said the king.

“What is a cat?”

“Have you never seen a

cat?" asked the captain.

"No," said the king. "We have never seen one. There are no cats in our land, so we do not know what they are like."

"I will soon show you," cried the captain. "I have a cat on my ship. She will soon catch your rats and mice. She will eat them. Then you will not be worried any more."

"Oh, how wonderful!" cried the queen. She clapped her hands for joy.

The king rubbed his hands, too. He was very pleased.

“Send for your cat,” he said. “Send for her now. I want to see her catch these rats and mice.”

The captain said to some of the sailors:

“Row back to the ship and bring the cat here as soon as you can.”

“Yes, sir,” said the sailors.

They rowed back to the ship. They soon found

the pussy. Then they took her to the island. The king and queen were delighted with her. The captain stroked her and she purred loudly.

“Now,” he said to the king, “if you put some more food on the table, you will soon see.”

“Bring in some more food,” cried the king.

The slaves hurried to bring some more dinner. Out came the rats and mice again. They ran up



PUSSY SPRANG FROM THE CAPTAIN'S ARMS

the legs of the table. They ran on to the big dishes of food. They began to nibble.

But only for a second. The pussy sprang from the captain's arms. She

jumped on the table. She caught some of the rats and mice in a twinkling. The others ran away as fast as they could. How happy the king and queen were! The slaves were happy, too.

“It’s simply wonderful!” cried the queen. “Oh, how I should like to have that cat!”

“We will buy her at once,” said the king. “She is worth bags of gold.”

“I want to buy that wonderful cat,” he said to the captain. “I will give you bags of gold for her.”

“But she is not my cat,” said the captain. “She belongs to a boy named Dick Whittington.”

“Where is he?” asked the king. “Is he on the ship? Send for him please. I want to talk to him.”

“He is not on my ship. He is in London,” said the captain. “Dick is only a poor boy. But I

am sure he would give you the cat."

"I will give him a lot of money," cried the king. "I must have that wonderful cat."

"Then I will leave her here with you," said the captain, "and I will take the money to Dick."

When it was time for the next meal, out came the mice. Again the clever pussy caught some. Every time they came she chased them.

One day the captain said:

“I must go back to my ship. It is time to return to England.”

So he said good-bye to the king and queen. The king gave him the bags of gold for Dick.

Back they sailed to England. They had a lot of nice things on the ship. They had brought them from the strange land. At last the ship reached London.

The sailors went to their homes for a holiday. The captain went to see the merchant. He took the bags of money with him. Soon he told the merchant all about the king and queen. He told him about the rats and mice. Then he showed the bags of gold.

The merchant was delighted. He sent for all his servants. They all came to his room. Dick was there, too. Then the



THE MERCHANT SENT FOR ALL HIS SERVANTS

merchant began to speak.

“My ship is safely home,” he said.

“There are all sorts of nice things on board. You all sent a present.

So there is a very nice present in exchange."

Then he looked at Dick.

"Dick," he said, "you had no nice present to send. You had only your cat. But you were kind. You sent her even though you loved her. Now there is a fine present for you. It was sent by a king and queen. They have bought your cat.

"Look, Dick!"

He held up the bags of money.



"IS IT ALL FOR ME?" HE ASKED

"These are yours, Dick. You are not a poor boy any longer. You are a very rich boy!"

Dick could hardly believe it. He looked at the bags of money.

“Is it all for me?”
he asked. The captain
smiled.

“Yes, Dick. It is all
for you,” he said. He
gave him the money.

“Oh, Dick!” cried Alice.
“I am so glad. Now you
need not work in the
kitchen any more.”

“But is all this money
for my cat?” asked Dick.
“It is too much for one
cat.”

“Ah,” said the captain,
“I must tell you all about

it, Dick. The ship sailed to a land far away. It was a beautiful land. There were lovely fruits and flowers. There were beautiful birds! But there were also lots of rats and mice.

“ There was not one cat in that land. Not even a little kitten. So nobody was quite happy. All their nice food was spoilt. They could not catch the rats and mice. There were too many of

them. They did not even know what a cat was like. Nobody had ever seen one.

“I showed your pussy to the king and queen.”

“Did she catch any mice?” asked Dick. “She caught all those that ran on my bed.”

“Oh yes,” said the captain. “She rushed at them when she saw them. She caught ever so many.”

“Then the king said he would give a lot of money

for her. So I gave him your cat, Dick. The king gave me these bags of gold for you. Now you are a very rich boy. And your cat is very happy.”

How happy Dick felt! His eyes shone with joy. All the servants came to shake hands with him. They said how pleased they were. Even the cross cook was glad. The merchant said:

“Now you are rich, you must learn many things.



ALL THE SERVANTS SHOOK HANDS WITH HIM

You cannot work in my kitchen. You shall live with me. I will take care of your money for you. When you are older you can have it yourself."

"Oh, Dick!" cried little Alice. "That will be so nice. I am glad you are

not going back to the kitchen."

The merchant bought Dick some nice clothes. Dick looked very handsome. He had a lot of lessons to learn. But he did not mind that at all. He worked very hard and soon became quite clever.

Everybody liked him, and everybody trusted him. He grew up to be a very good man. One day some men came to see him.

“ Mr. Whittington,” they said, ‘will you be the Lord Mayor, please? Everybody wants you to be our Lord Mayor.”

Dick said:

“ Yes, I shall be very pleased to be the Lord Mayor.”

The men were glad to hear him say that. They went away to tell everybody. Then Dick said to himself:

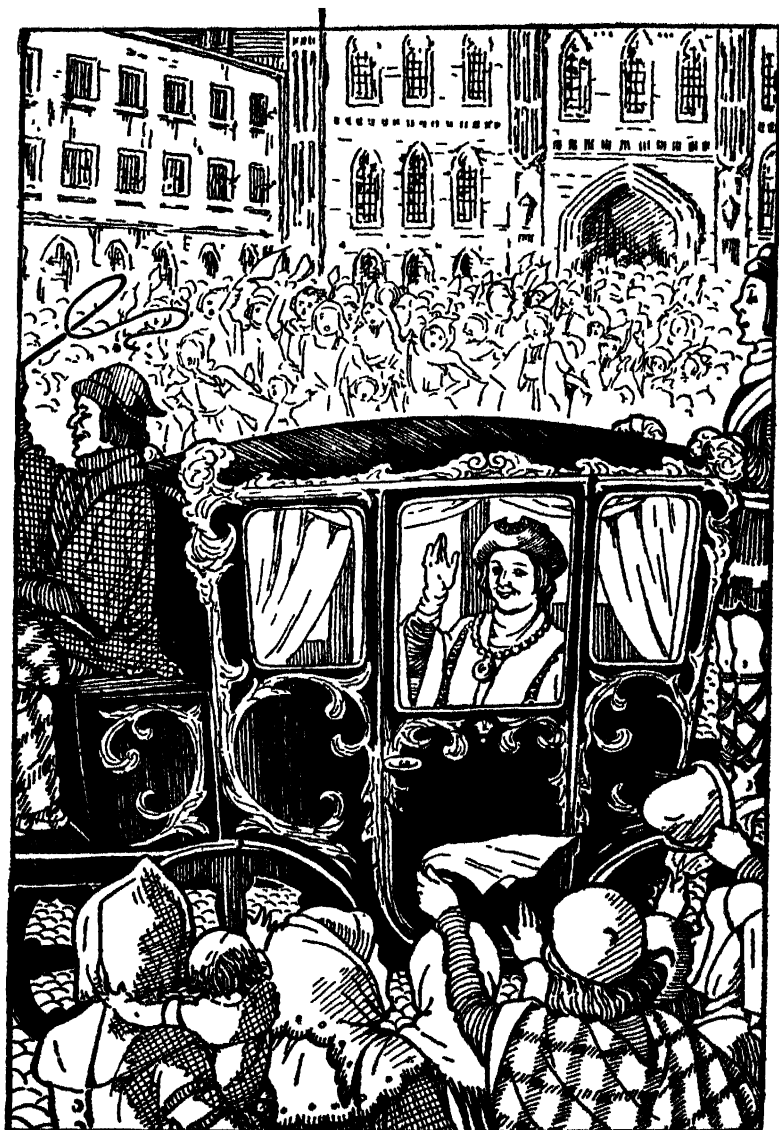
“ Bow Bells told me the truth. They said, ‘Turn

again, Whittington, Lord Mayor of London.' How glad I am that I listened to them!"

One day Dick rode out in a beautiful coach. He wore fine clothes and a big chain round his neck. There were crowds of people in the streets. They all waved their handkerchiefs and hats.

"Hurrah! Hurrah!" they cried.

"Hurrah for Dick Whittington, the Lord



DICK WHITTINGTON, LORD MAYOR OF LONDON

Mayor of London."

Later on Dick married Alice and became the merchant's son. He became very rich, too. But he never forgot that he had once been a poor boy. He was always kind to poor people. He helped them whenever he could.

And he never, never forgot the message of Bow Bells!

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CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
1. Mr. Fox Goes A-Hunting - - -	5
2. The Tar Baby - - -	15
3. Mr. Wolf Helps Mr. Fox - - -	30
4. How Mr. Rabbit Lost his Tail - -	40
5. Mr. Fox and the Little Rabbits - -	46
6. Mr. Fox Goes down a Well - -	55

MR. RABBIT AND MR. FOX

CHAPTER ONE

Mr. Fox Goes A-Hunting

Long, long ago, before there were any men in the world, some of the animals lived as we do now. They had their own little houses and they could talk to one another.

One morning Mr. Fox came to his front door.

“What a fine day it is,” he said. “I think I will go hunting to-day. There is no food in the larder.”

So Mr. Fox got his gun and put a bag over his back. Then he set off down the road.

On the way he met Mr. Rabbit.

“Good morning, Mr. Rabbit,” he said. “I am going hunting. Would

you care| to come with
me?"

But Mr. Rabbit was



MR. FOX WENT OFF ALONE

feeling lazy that morning
and he said that he had
other things to do. So

Mr. Fox went off alone.

First of all he went to the Big Wood. Then he went to the Little Wood. Then he went to the fields near Farmer Bull's house.

There were rabbits and birds in all of them, and Mr. Fox killed so many that his bag was soon full.

Late in the day Mr. Rabbit thought he would walk along the road and meet Mr. Fox. He walked

for a long way, and then he jumped up on to a tree stump to wait. He could see the woods from the tree stump and in a short time Mr. Fox came out of them.

Mr. Fox was carrying his heavy bag and his back was bent.

“What a fine, full bag,” said Mr. Rabbit to himself. “I wish I had gone hunting.”

Then Mr. Rabbit did a funny thing. He jumped

off the tree stump and lay down on the road as if he were dead.

When Mr. Fox came along, he saw the rabbit and stopped.



MR. FOX CAME ALONG

“This is the fattest rabbit I ever saw,” he said to himself. “I wish I could take it, but my bag is too full and too heavy. I must leave it where it is.”

So he walked on.

As soon as Mr. Fox was out of sight, Mr. Rabbit jumped up and ran among the trees at the side of the road. He ran as fast as he could and soon passed Mr. Fox. Then he jumped on to the road

again and lay down as if he were dead.

When Mr. Fox came along, he saw the rabbit and stopped.

“Why, here is another dead rabbit,” he said to himself. “It is just as fat as the other one. I never saw two fatter rabbits.”

Mr. Fox looked at the rabbit on the road again, and then he said,

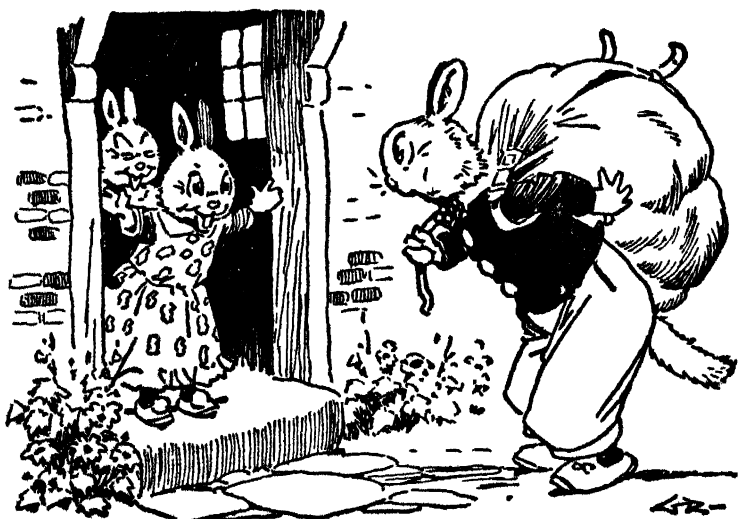
“If I took these two rabbits home everybody

would think I had killed them. Everybody would say that I was the finest hunter in the world. I must go back' for the other rabbit."

Mr. Fox put down his heavy bag by the side of the road and ran back to get the first rabbit. As soon as he was out of sight, Mr. Rabbit jumped up, put the bag on his back, and set off home.

So Mr. Fox lost all that he had shot, and

Mr. Rabbit and his family had a fine feast. Mr. Fox knew that Mr. Rabbit had played a trick on him and made up his mind to pay Mr. Rabbit back.



CHAPTER TWO

The Tar Baby

Mr. Fox thought and thought about how he could punish Mr. Rabbit for stealing his bag and all the birds and rabbits he had shot. He tried many times to catch Mr. Rabbit; but Mr. Rabbit was too clever for him.

At last Mr. Fox made a plan. He took some straw and some old

clothes and he made a kind of scare-crow. Then he set it up by the side of the road and covered it all over with thick, black, sticky tar. He called it a Tar Baby.

By and by Mr. Rabbit came along the road. When he saw the Tar Baby, he stopped.

“Good morning,” he said. “Isn’t the weather lovely?”

Of course, the Tar Baby could not speak.

Mr. Fox was hiding behind some bushes and laughed to himself.

“I hope you are quite well,” said Mr. Rabbit to the Tar Baby.

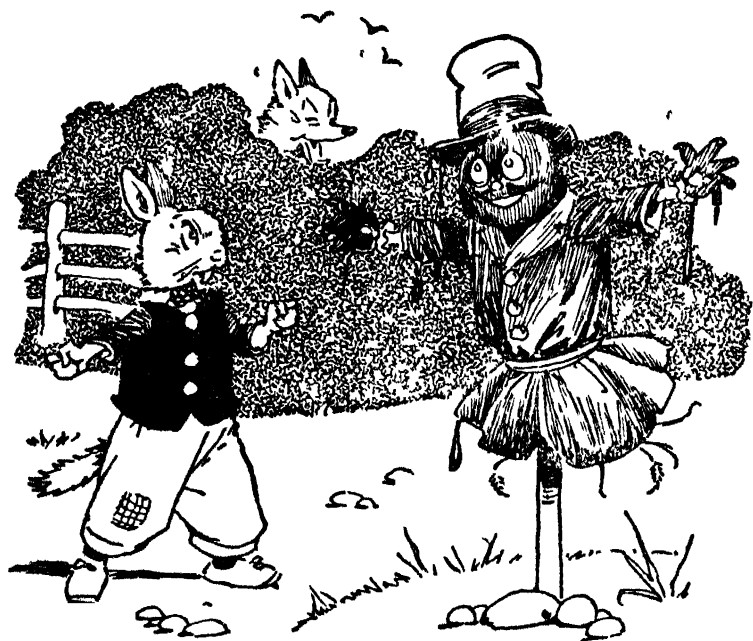
Still the Tar Baby said nothing. Mr. Fox laughed again.

“Why do you not answer?” said Mr. Rabbit to the Tar Baby. “Are you deaf? If you are deaf, I can speak louder.”

Still the Tar Baby said nothing. Mr. Fox laughed

and laughed.

Then Mr. Rabbit became angry.



THEN MR. RABBIT BECAME ANGRY

“You are too proud to speak to me,” he said to the Tar Baby. “That is

what is wrong with you. You are stuck up. I do not like stuck up people, and I am going to hit you, if you do not speak."

The Tar Baby still said nothing. Mr. Fox laughed till the tears were running down his cheeks.

"Take off your hat and say good morning," said Mr. Rabbit to the Tar Baby. "If you do not, I will hit you."

The Tar Baby still said nothing. So Mr. Rabbit

hit him on the side of his head with his paw. But the paw stuck in the tar and Mr. Rabbit could not pull it away.

“Let me go,” he shouted. “Let me go, or I will hit you again.”

The Tar Baby still said nothing, so Mr. Rabbit hit him on the other side of the head with his other front paw. It stuck in the tar too.

Then Mr. Rabbit kicked the Tar Baby with his

feet, and they stuck in the tar. Then he butted the Tar Baby with his head, and it stuck in the tar. Mr. Rabbit shouted and shouted, but he could not move.

Then Mr. Fox came out from behind the bushes.

“Good morning, Mr. Rabbit,” he said. “You look kind of stuck up this morning.”

Mr. Rabbit kept on shouting. And Mr. Fox

rolled on the ground and
laughed and laughed till



MR. RABBIT IS "STUCK UP"

he could laugh no more.
At last he stood up and
dried his eyes.

“Well, Mr. Rabbit,” he said, “I have caught you now. What a fine dinner you will make. You are the fattest rabbit that I ever saw.”

Mr. Rabbit was too angry to speak.

“Who asked you to touch my Tar Baby?” Mr. Fox went on. “I did not stick you up there. You stuck yourself. And you will stay there till I go home and start a fire to roast you.”

“You can do what you like with me, Mr. Fox,” said Mr. Rabbit. “But please do not throw me on that briar patch. Roast me or boil me or chop me up, but do not throw me on that briar patch.”

“It is too much trouble to start a fire,” said Mr. Fox. “I think I will hang you.”

“Hang me, if you want to, Mr. Fox,” said Mr. Rabbit. “But, please do

not throw me on that briar patch."

"I have no string to hang you," said Mr. Fox. "I think I will drown you."

"Oh, drown me if you want to, Mr. Fox," said Mr. Rabbit. "But *please* do not throw me on that briar patch."

"There is no water near," said Mr. Fox. "Perhaps, after all, I will just skin you."

"Skin me, or drown

me, or hang me, or roast me, Mr. Fox,"} said Mr. Rabbit. "But, please, *please*, do not throw me on that briar patch."

Mr. Fox looked at the briar patch. He saw how thick it was and how big and sharp the thorns were. He wanted to hurt Mr. Rabbit as much as he could.

"Mr. Rabbit is afraid of that briar patch," he said to himself. "If I throw him on to it, it

will hurt him very much. It is so thick that he will not get away from it, and the big thorns will prick him." "

So he caught Mr.



HE CAUGHT MR. RABBIT BY THE HIND LEGS

Rabbit by the hind legs and pulled him from the Tar Baby. Then he threw him right into the middle of the briar patch, and sat down to see what would happen.

In a minute or two he heard somebody calling,

“Mr. Fox! Mr. Fox!”

He looked up and saw Mr. Rabbit far away on the hill-side. He was sitting on a log and singing,

“Ha, ha, ha,
He, he, he,
Mr. Fox tried
But he couldn't catch me.”

“No, you couldn't catch me, Mr. Fox,” he shouted.
“I was born and bred in a briar patch. I know my way in, and I know my way out. And the thorns don't prick me.”

Then he jumped off the log and ran home.

CHAPTER THREE

Mr. Wolf Helps Mr. Fox

Mr. Fox still tried his best to catch Mr. Rabbit. But Mr. Rabbit was too clever and Mr. Fox began to feel very angry and sad.

One day Mr. Fox met Mr. Wolf.

“Good morning, Mr. Fox,” said Mr. Wolf.

“Good morning, Mr. Wolf,” said Mr. Fox.



MR. FOX AND MR. WOLF

“You do not look at all well,” said Mr. Wolf. “Have you been ill?”

“I am very sad,” said Mr. Fox. “Mr. Rabbit has been playing tricks on me and I have been trying to catch him. But he always gets away and plays more tricks.”

“You must try to get him into your house,” said Mr. Wolf. “Then you can catch him and eat him.”

“I have tried that,”

said Mr. Fox, shaking his head, "but it is no good."

"I'll help you to get him into your house," said Mr. Wolf. "I have a good plan. You go home and lie down on your bed. Pretend you are dead. When Mr. Rabbit comes into the house, jump up and catch him, and you and I will eat him for supper."

"How will Mr. Rabbit come into my house?"

Mr. Fox asked.

“You leave that to me,” said Mr. Wolf.

Mr. Fox ran off home and lay down on his bed. Mr. Wolf went to Mr. Rabbit’s house and knocked at the door.

“Who is there?” called Mr. Rabbit.

“A friend,” said Mr. Wolf.

“Too many friends spoil the dinner,” called Mr. Rabbit. “What friend is it?”

“I bring bad news,” said Mr. Wolf. “Mr. Fox died this morning. I thought you would like to know.”

Then Mr. Wolf went off down the road to his own house.

Mr. Rabbit sat down and scratched his head. He wondered if this was a trick to catch him.

“Well,” he said to himself at last, “I will take a walk along to Mr. Fox’s house and see

what is to be seen.”

He jumped up and



MR. RABBIT LOOKED THROUGH THE WINDOW

went out. Soon he came
near Mr. Fox's house.
All was quiet. There

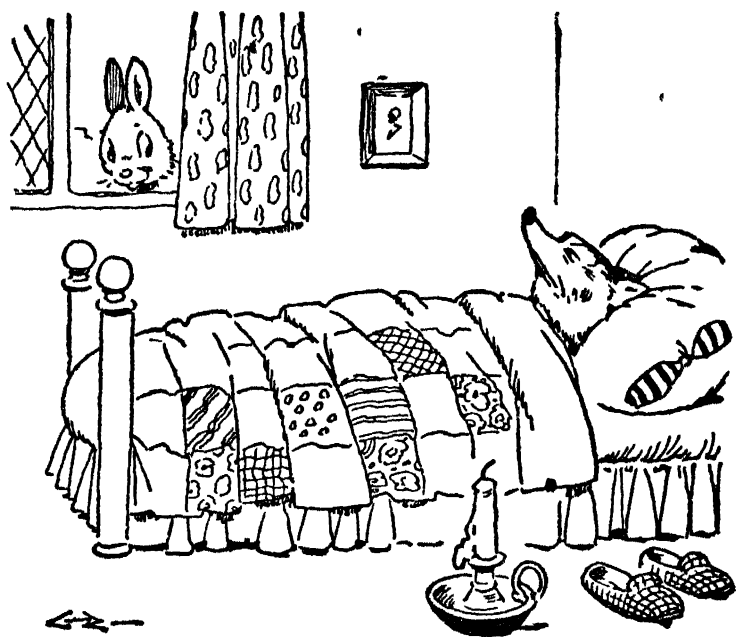
was nobody to be seen. No smoke was coming out of the chimney.

Mr. Rabbit went nearer still and looked through the open window. There was Mr. Fox on the bed with his eyes shut. Mr. Rabbit called to him but he did not move.

“Poor Mr. Fox,” said Mr. Rabbit out loud. “I hope he is not really dead. He looks as if he was dead, but perhaps he isn’t. If he was dead

he would lift one of his legs and shout *Wahoo!*”

Mr. Fox did not move.



MR. FOX DID NOT MOVE

Then Mr. Rabbit said
louder still,

“This is very funny.

Mr. Fox looks as if he was dead. But if he really was dead he would lift one of his legs and shout *Wahoo!*”

At that minute Mr. Fox lifted one of his legs and shouted *Wahoo!* As soon as he did that, Mr. Rabbit knew that he was not dead at all. He turned and ran as fast as he could, and he did not stop running till he was safe in his own house.

CHAPTER FOUR

How Mr. Rabbit Lost his Tail.

Mr. Rabbit was very like the rabbits you see now-a-days. But in one way he was different. He had a fine, long, bushy tail.

One day he was walking along the road when he met Mr. Fox carrying a big string of fish.

"That is a fine string of fish," said Mr. Rabbit.



"THAT IS A FINE STRING OF FISH"

"I am very fond of fish."

"Well, you can go and catch some for yourself,"

said Mr. Fox.

“But, I do not know where to go or how to catch them,” said Mr. Rabbit.

Mr. Fox smiled.

“Do you know the stream at the foot of the hill?” he asked. “Well, after dark to-night, you go down there. Sit on the bank with your tail in the water, and stay there all night. In the morning, pull your tail out and there will be

some fine fish sticking to it."

So that night Mr. Rabbit went to the stream and sat down with his tail in the water. It was very cold and soon it began to freeze. Mr. Rabbit wanted to go home. Then he thought of the fine fish he was going to catch, and stayed where he was.

At last it was morning, and Mr. Rabbit tried to pull his tail out of the

water. But the water had frozen and the tail was held fast in the ice. Mr. Rabbit pulled as hard as he could, but he could not get his tail out.

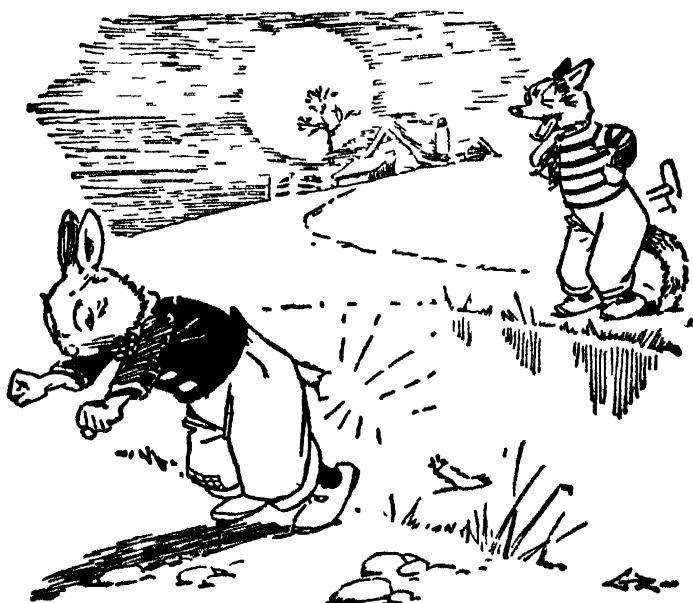
Then he pulled harder than ever. All at once the tail broke. Mr. Rabbit found himself lying on the bank with nothing but a little white stump where his fine, long, bushy tail had been.

Somebody called him from the other side of the

stream. It was Mr. Fox.

“Oh, Mr. Rabbit, you do look funny without your tail,” he cried. “I can play as good’ tricks as you can.”

Then he laughed and



THE TAIL BROKE

laughed till he could laugh no more.

The strange thing is that from that day to this no rabbit has ever had a long tail.

CHAPTER FIVE

Mr. Fox and the Little Rabbits

One day Mr. Fox went to call on Mr. Rabbit.

All the little rabbits were playing hide-and-seek in the kitchen. They

were having such a fine game that they did not see Mr. Fox at first.

Then Billy Rabbit saw Mr. Fox and said,

“Oh, Mr. Fox, I am so sorry. Father has gone to shoot and Mother is shopping.”

Mr. Fox sat down in a rocking-chair and looked at the little rabbits. They were all so plump and fat that his mouth watered. “What a fine dinner they would make!” he said to

himself.

Mr. Fox sat and rocked himself in the chair and said nothing. The little rabbits began to be afraid and wished their father would come home.

At last Mr. Fox said,
“Rabbits! take that sieve and get me some water from the well. Hurry up or I’ll kill you and eat you.”

The little rabbits took the sieve and ran to the well. But the water all

ran out through the holes.

. Then a little bird began to sing. This is what he sang:

“A sieve will hold water just
like a tray
If you fill it with moss and
daub it with clay.”

The little rabbits jumped up. They put moss and clay in the sieve and filled up all the holes. Then they filled it with water and ran back with it to Mr. Fox.

Mr. Fox was very, very

angry. He began to think of another excuse for kill-



MR. FOX AND THE LITTLE RABBITS

ing the little rabbits.
There was a big bit of

wood on the floor near the fire.

“Rabbits!” Mr. Fox shouted. “Take that bit of wood and put it on the fire. Hurry up or I’ll kill you and eat you.”

The poor little rabbits tried to lift the wood. But it was too heavy. They tried and tried, but they could not move it.

“Come on, now, Rabbits!” Mr. Fox roared. “I am waiting.”

The little rabbits tried

again. But still they could not move the wood.

Then the little bird came to the window and began to sing. This is what he sang:

“It’s all right, Rabbits! Here comes your dad.

He will soon punish that Foxy cad!”

Mr. Rabbit came in at the door. He had his gun in his hand. Mr. Fox did not see him.

“Come on, Rabbits!” shouted Mr. Fox. “I can-

not wait any longer. I am going to kill you and eat you all."

Then Mr. Rabbit pointed his gun at Mr. Fox.

"Mr. Fox," he said, "If you do not get out of this house at once I will shoot you dead and we will all eat *you*."

Mr. Fox jumped out of the rocking-chair. He looked at Mr. Rabbit. He looked at Mr. Rabbit's gun. Then he ran out of the house as fast as he

could.

“Oh, Daddy, we are so glad to see you,” all the little rabbits cried.

And the little bird flew on to a tree and began to sing. This is what he sang:

“Old man Fox got a very big
fright
When he saw Mr. Rabbit’s
gun.
He is running so hard that I
think he might
Not stop till he reaches the
sun !”

CHAPTER SIX

Mr. Fox goes down a Well

After Mr. Rabbit lost his tail, he and Mr. Fox became more friendly. All the same, Mr. Fox still wanted to catch Mr. Rabbit and eat him. And Mr. Rabbit wanted to get even with Mr. Fox for the trick he had played.

One hot summer day, Mr. Fox and Mr. Rabbit and a lot of the other

animals were helping Mr. Bear to make hay. It was hard work and the sun was very hot.

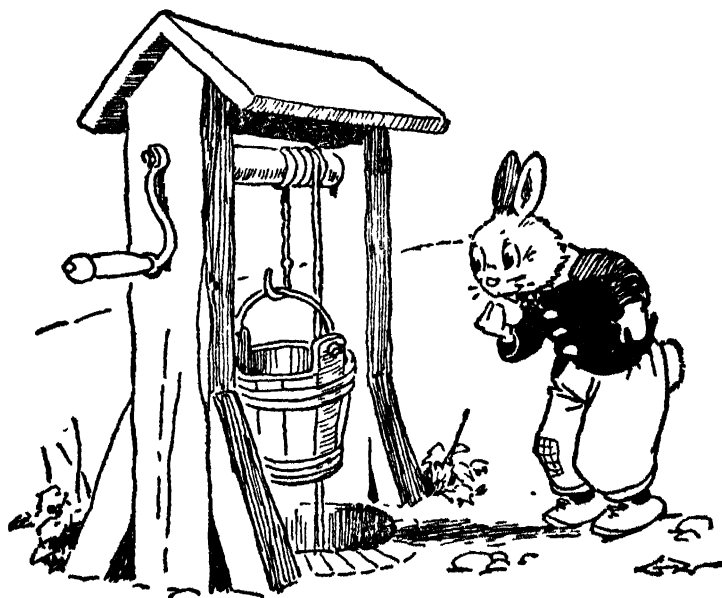
Mr. Rabbit became so tired that he ran out of the field when nobody was looking. He thought he would look for a cool place where he could sit down and take a rest.

At last he came to a well with a bucket hanging over it.

“That looks cool,” he said to himself. “I’ll jump

into the bucket and have a nap."

He did so, and at once the bucket began to go down, down, down the well. Poor Mr. Rabbit was very scared. When



"I'LL JUMP INTO THE BUCKET"

the bucket struck the water in the well, it floated. Mr. Rabbit was not heavy enough to make it sink.

How was Mr. Rabbit to get out? He looked at the water. He looked at the blue sky so far above. He looked at the round, smooth sides of the well. There was no way out.

Now, Mr. Fox had seen Mr. Rabbit leave the field and had followed him. He wanted to see what

Mr. Rabbit was going to do.

Mr. Fox was very puzzled when Mr. Rabbit jumped into the bucket.

“What is he going to do down that well?” he asked himself.

Then he crept nearer the well and looked over the edge. He could see nothing.

Meantime Mr. Rabbit was shaking with fear. He was afraid that the bucket would turn over

and throw him in the water. All at once he heard a shout from above.



"WHAT ARE YOU DOING THERE?"

"Hullo, Mr. Rabbit,"
said Mr. Fox's voice,
"What are you doing

there?"

“Oh, I am just fishing,”
said Mr. Rabbit.

“Are there many fish
down there, Mr. Rabbit,”
asked Mr. Fox.

“I think there are lots
of fish, Mr. Fox. Why not
come down and help me
to catch them?”

“But how am I to get
down?” asked Mr. Fox.

Now the rope at the
well had a bucket at
each end. When one
bucket was down the

well, the other was at the top. So Mr. Rabbit called to Mr. Fox,



MR. FOX GOING DOWN THE WELL

“Jump into the bucket up there. It will bring you down safe and sound.”

Mr. Fox jumped into the bucket and began to go down the well. But as his bucket went down, Mr. Rabbit's came up. They passed one another half-way, and Mr. Rabbit shouted:

“Good-bye, Mr. Fox, take care
of your clothes,
For this is the way that the
wide world goes;
Some go up and some go
down,
But you'll reach the bottom
safe and sound.”

As soon as his bucket

came to the top, Mr. Rabbit jumped out and ran home. Nobody knows what happened to Mr. Fox. Perhaps he is still in the bucket at the bottom of the well.



STRONGWING



'THE BIG HOUSE IS ON FIRE'
(Page 34)

STRONGWING

BY
E. E. ELLSWORTH

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STRONGWING

CHAPTER ONE

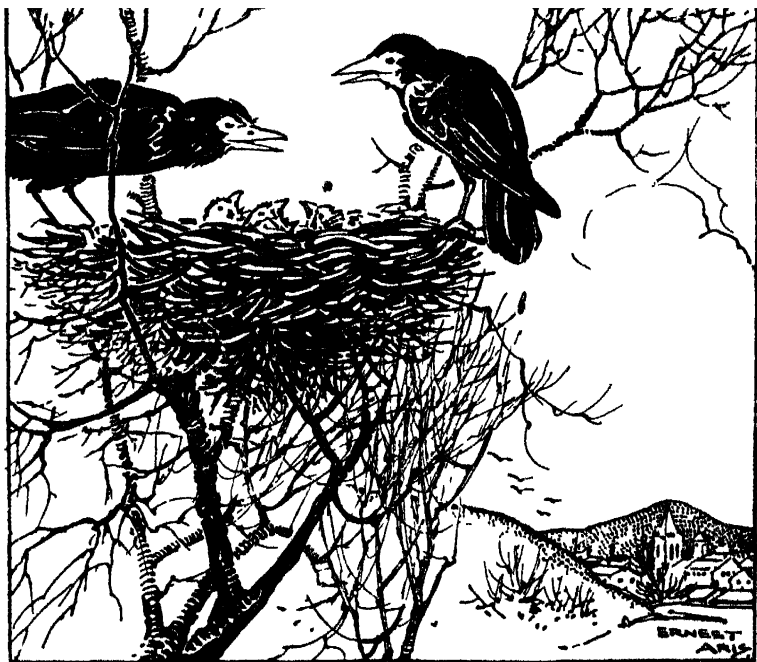
A Very Fine Young Rook

Not far from a big town, there stood a high hill. On the top of the hill was an old grey house. Many tall trees stood near the house. Some were oak trees, some were beech trees, and some were elms.

The elm trees were the tallest of all, and nearly every one had a nest in it. These nests belonged to the rooks who had lived in them for many years.

Every spring, the rooks were very busy making new nests or mending their old ones.

They always began before the other birds who lived near, and they talked loudly all the time. The other birds often



A FINE NEST

said, “Just listen to those noisy rooks. We always know when they are making their nests.”

In one big tree, a couple of rooks had

made a fine nest. They had three rook children, and they were very proud of them. One of them was called Strongwing, and he was a very fine young rook.

From the time he was quite a baby bird, Strongwing had been the biggest of the family. When the father and mother rook began to teach their children to fly, Strongwing was the first to learn. The other

grown-up rooks in Elm Town often said to their children:

“Look at young Strongwing. He can go alone already, while you cannot even fly from the tree.”

By the time Strongwing was a year old, he was a very fine young rook, and very beautiful, too. Every rook liked Strongwing, for he was always kind to everybody. He did



STRONGWING WAS A VERY FINE YOUNG ROOK

not quarrel with the other young rooks, but would always help them if he could.

When the old rooks were talking, Strongwing always kept very quiet. He listened to all his

father and mother told him, and made up his mind to be as wise as he could.

One windy' day, Strongwing thought he would like to have a house of his own. It was very early spring, but rooks always like to be the first to build. So Strongwing began to look around for someone to help him build.

In an old elm tree close by, there lived a

very friendly little rook.
Her name was Glossy. .

Strongwing had often seen her when she was learning to fly. He thought she was a very pretty little rook. So he made up his mind to ask her to help him.

First, he flew to a branch of a tree, smoothed down his feathers, and made himself look very smart. Then he flew down to the tree where Glossy was sitting.

He perched on a branch beside her.

“Good morning, Glossy,” he said.

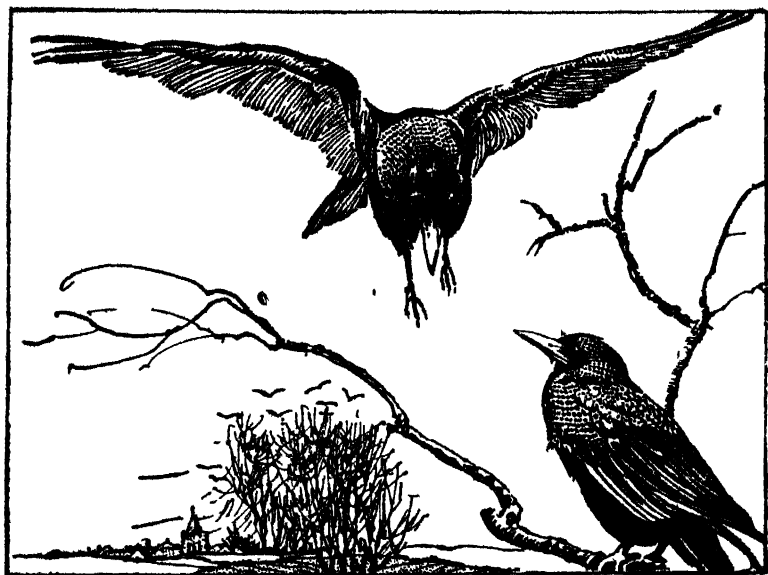
“Good morning, Strongwing,” she replied.

“What a windy day it is!” said Strongwing.

“Do you like the wind?”

“Yes,” said Glossy. “I like it very much.”

“So do I,” said Strongwing. “I like it when it blows the branches to and fro, and gives me a lovely ride.”



STRONGWING AND GLOSSY

“The wind nearly blew me off the tree just now,” said Glossy.

“Oh dear! You must be careful,” said Strongwing, “because you are not so strong as I am.

The wind could not blow me off the tree, I am much too strong. Have you had your breakfast yet, Glossy?"

"No," replied Glossy, "I was just going to see what I could find."

"I'll get you some," said Strongwing. "The farmer is ploughing one of his fields. There are plenty of wire-worms there. I'll go and get you one."

Away he flew to the

field. With his strong beak he dug up a fine fat worm. Then he flew back to Glossy.

As soon as she saw the worm, Glossy opened her beak. Strongwing popped the worm in her mouth.

“Oh, thank you,” she said when she had eaten it. “It was lovely.”

“There are plenty more,” said Strongwing. “Come with me and we can get as many as we

want.”

Together they flew to the field, and had a fine feast.

Soon there were such a lot of birds hopping about, all over the field. They were tugging with their beaks, and picking up the worms.

Once or twice a rook gave a strange little call. Then every rook left off eating and flew up into the air. They knew that the call meant “Danger!

Fly up". It was one of the things they had learnt to do when they were quite young. So, whenever they heard it, up they flew at once.

Strongwing and Glossy stayed in the fields for a long time. Then they made up their minds to make a nest the very next day.



THEY BEGAN TO BUILD THEIR NEST

CHAPTER TWO

Four Little Rooks

Early next morning,
Strongwing and Glossy
began to build their nest
in an elm tree. It took

them a long time to make the nest, but they did not mind that.

Other rooks were busy, too, making their nests. Sometimes they could not find the right kind of stick near the elms. Then they had to fly far away until they could get what they wanted.

Everyone was very busy in Elm Town, but the rooks did not work quietly. Indeed, they were so noisy that the people

in the big grey house
said:

“ I wonder what the
rooks are talking about?
They are cawing from
morning till night.”

At last Strongwing's
nest was finished.

Soon Glossy was sitting
in it with four eggs under
her warm breast. These
were a pale green colour,
with dark green and
brownish spots on them.

All over Elm Town, the
mother birds were sitting

in their nests. Only their black tails could be seen, as they kept their eggs warm.

Strongwing went every day to get food for Glossy



FOOD FOR GLOSSY

while she was sitting on her eggs. He did not mind how far he went to get something nice for her to eat.

Not far away from Elm Town there was a farm. In one of the fields there were lots of white chickens. Strongwing had often seen the farmer's wife feeding them. He knew that they had plenty to eat. So one day he said to Glossy:

“The ground is so hard. All the worms seem to have hidden themselves away. I think I will go to the farm to-day to look for food.”

Away he flew into the air. It was a windy day, but Strongwing had very strong wings. He soon reached the farm.

Strongwing saw a piece of dry bread.

“I must get that for Glossy,” he said to himself. So down he flew

and picked up the bread in his beak. Then away he flew to Elm Town.

“Here is something nice for you, Glossy,” he said when he reached the nest. “I got it from the farm. Those big white birds have plenty to eat every day. They did not mind me taking this.”

Glossy ate it at once, for she was very hungry.

“Oh, Strongwing!” she said. “It tastes so

good."

"I am so glad you like it," said Strongwing. "I shall go to the farm every day to find something for you."

Then one day, something wonderful happened. Four baby rooks came out of their shells. Strongwing and Glossy were so happy. They were quite certain that nobody else had four such lovely babies.

They were such



SUCH HUNGRY LITTLE THINGS

hungry little things, too. Strongwing made up his mind to get them all the food he could. He wanted them to grow up to be just as strong as he was.

So away he flew every morning to get food for them. Often he was the first rook to leave Elm Town. 'Of course, there were plenty of baby rooks in the other nests. They were all just as tiny and hungry as Glossy's babies. All the other rooks were busy, too, finding food for their little ones. So Strongwing often had to fly a very long way before he could get enough.

Glossy was busy, too, but she was not so strong as Strongwing. She could not fly so far. Often Strongwing did not get enough to eat himself, but he did not mind it at all.

So the little rook babies grew strong day by day.



NOT FAR AWAY WAS A LIGHT

CHAPTER THREE

The Fire

One night, Strongwing was very tired. He had been busy all day bringing food for the little ones. Glossy was in the

nest, keeping them snug and warm, and Strongwing perched on a branch quite close.

He had been asleep for a long time, when suddenly he awoke. Not far away was a light.

It was not the moon shining, and Strongwing could not think what it was. He looked at it for a little while, then he felt that something was wrong. He began to call the other birds.

“Be quiet, Strongwing,” said one or two. “You will wake up our babies, and we want them to sleep. We are tired after flying about all day long. Go to sleep and let us sleep as well.”

But Strongwing did not go to sleep. He got off his branch, and woke up the very oldest rook.

“Look at the big house,” he said.

The oldest rook opened one sleepy eye, and put

his head on one side.

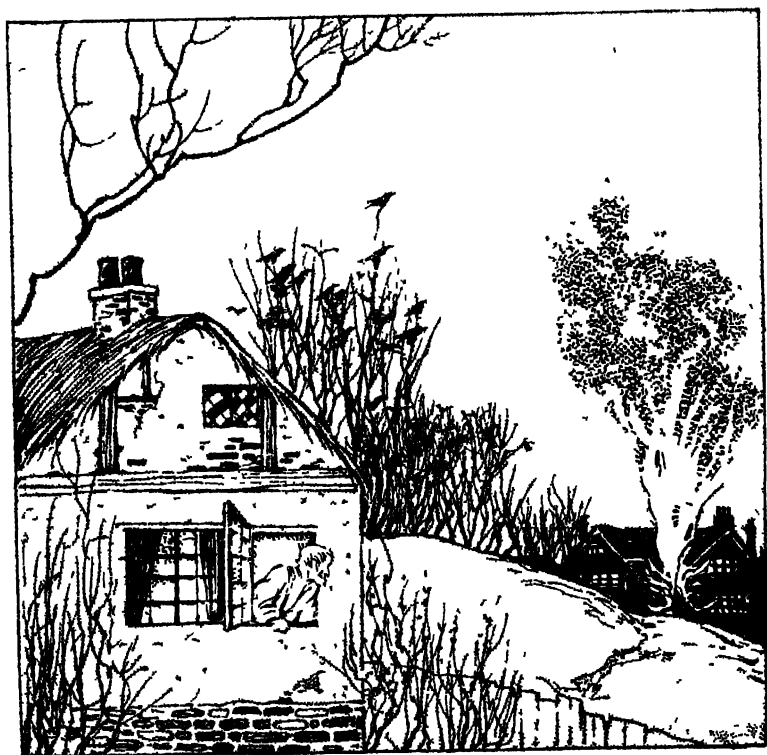
“What is all this fuss about, Strongwing?” he said. “Why don’t you go to sleep?”

“I am sure something is wrong at the big house,” Strongwing said. “Look at that strange light.”

The very oldest rook looked at the big house, and saw the strange light, too. Then up in the air he flew, calling out loudly:

“The big house is on fire. Fire! Fire!”

Then all the rooks flew up in the air, calling “Fire! Fire!”



THE GARDENER AT HIS WINDOW

They made such a noise that the gardener woke up.

He got up and looked out of his cottage window.

Then he saw the strange light, too.

“Tom,” he called to his big son. “Tom! Wake up and dress. The big house is on fire!”

In a few moments Tom and his father were dressed. Then they ran as fast as they could to

wake up the people in the big house.

Near the house was a small lake, and soon they brought plenty of water to put out the fire.

After a time the fire was put out, and everybody was very glad.

Mr. Hurst, who lived at the big house, thanked the gardener.

“If you had not seen the fire,” he said, “we might have been burnt to death. You have

saved our lives.”

“The rooks woke me up,” said the gardener. “They made such a noise that I got up to see what was the matter. Then I saw the fire. I think the rooks were trying to tell us about it.”

“Then we must thank the rooks as well,” said Mr. Hurst. “They are very clever birds, and I hope they will never leave us.”

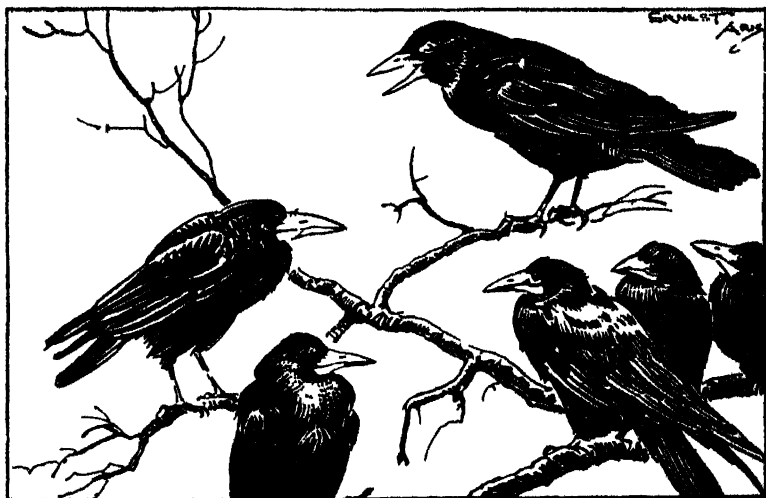
The next day all the old rooks had a big meeting. They nodded their black heads, and talked for a long time. Then the very oldest rook called Strongwing.

“Come here, Strongwing,” he said. “We have something to say to you.”

Strongwing could not think what they wanted to say, but he flew across to them.

“We want to thank

you, Strongwing," said
the very oldest rook,
"for letting us know



"WE WANT TO THANK YOU, STRONGWING"

about the fire. We are
all very proud of you,
and we think that one
day you will be a very
wise rook."

Strongwing was very glad to hear this. He wanted to grow up to be a wise old rook one day.

“I am very glad I did see the fire,” he said. “If the people in the big house had been burnt, we should all have been very sad. We have always been told that they are our friends, and we do not want to lose them.”

When the other rooks heard this, they flapped

their wings and nodded their heads.

“That is quite true, Strongwing,” they cried. “That is quite true. We do not want to lose our friends from the big house.”

“Let us fly over the house,” said the oldest rook. “That will tell the people that we are glad they are safe. Come on, Strongwing, you shall go first to-day.”

Later on that day,

Glossy said to Strong-wing:

“ I am so glad you told us about the fire, Strong-wing.”

“ I am glad I saw it,” he said, “ as now we are all safe, and our dear babies, too.”

CHAPTER FOUR

Strongwing the Leader

After this, everybody began to think that Strongwing was very clever as well as strong and brave. The oldest rook very often talked to him.

Soon Strongwing was asked to all the meetings in Elm Town. Every young rook made up his

mind to grow up just like him.

Glossy, too, was very proud of Strongwing, and used to say to her babies:

“ You must try to grow up just as good as your father. There is nobody who can fly so far as he can.”

One day Strongwing told the rooks that the farmer who lived near had gone away.

All the rooks were

very sorry to hear this. They liked the old farmer.

“I am sorry to hear this,” said the very oldest rook. “I hope the new farmer will be kind



“WE ONLY WANTED THE GRUBS”

to us. The old farmer always let us follow him up and down the fields. He knew that we did not want to steal his seeds. We only wanted the grubs that live in the ground. They eat his seeds and spoil his crops. We do not, although people often think we do."

"We must all be careful," said Strongwing. "One of us must watch every day till we find

out if he is a kind man or not."

After that, the old rook told one or two others to watch. Every day while the rooks were busy eating, one or two sat in a tree close by. But nobody came to hurt them or chase them away, and so they all felt safe and happy.

Then one day a very sad thing happened.

One of the fields had just been ploughed. All

the rooks were busy eating the fat grubs and beetles. The young ones were there as well. Suddenly there was a loud bang.

All the rooks flew up in the air. But one rook did not fly up with them. It was the very oldest rook. He had been shot by the farmer.

“Come away,” called Strongwing very loudly. “Come away, everybody.”

Away they all flew



SHOT BY THE FARMER

cawing loudly.

They perched on some tall trees, and began to talk sadly to each other.

“Oh dear, dear!” said one. “The oldest and wisest rook is dead.

What shall we do now?"

"We shall never be able to go to that field again," said a young rook.

"We shall not be able to eat any more of the lovely fat grubs. They tasted so good, too."

"So did the wire-worms," said another, "and there were so many of them."

"What shall we do, Strongwing?" asked an old rook. "What do you think about it?"

“Well,” said Strongwing. “For some time we will keep away from the farm. There are plenty of other places where we can find food. We are all strong. We have good wings. We can fly a long way and it will not hurt us.”

“Perhaps the farmer will not do it again,” said a young rook.

“I am sure he will,” said Strongwing. “Now if you will all come back

to Elm Town, I will tell you what I think is best for us to do." .

They all flew back to Elm Town, and gathered round Strongwing.

When all was quiet, he began to talk.

"Now I will tell you my plan," he said. "You know that all rooks love to go behind men when they are ploughing. The sharp knives of the plough turn the earth over, and we can easily see the

grubs."

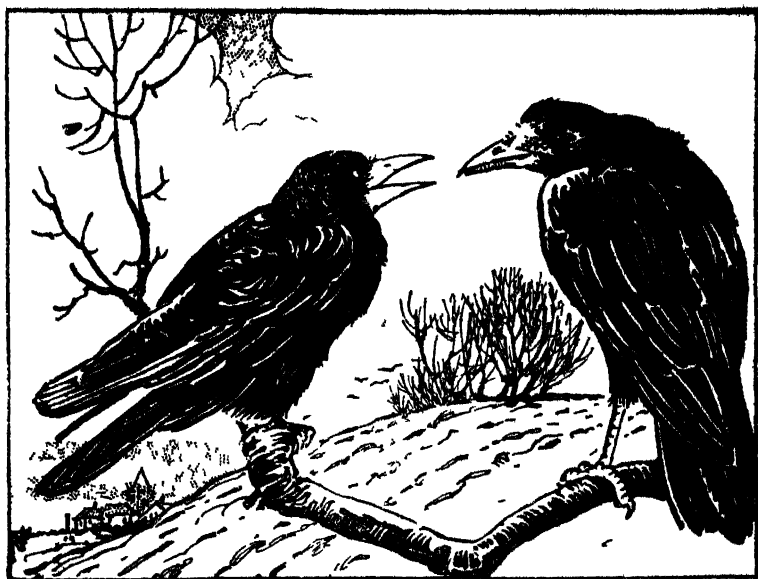
"Yes," said all the rooks. "That is true, Strongwing. We learnt all that when we were very young."

"Then if we eat up the grubs and worms," said Strongwing, "we are helping the farmer. If we did not eat the worms they would eat up his seeds."

"Yes," cried all the rooks very loudly. "The farmer ought to be pleased

with us, instead of shooting us.”

“The old farmer did not mind,” said Strongwing. “He liked us to come. The beetles and worms could not do him any harm because we ate them. Now, we will not help this farmer. We will not go near his fields. Then the worms and beetles will eat up his seeds, and spoil his crop. If we do this for a year or two, he will



"WE WILL NOT GO NEAR HIS FIELDS"

go away, and somebody else will come instead."

"Oh, Strongwing," cried everybody. "How clever you are to think of such a thing!"

"Then we will begin

to-morrow," said Strong-wing.

So the next day everybody flew far away to another place to find their food.

Day after day went past, and nobody went to the new farmer's fields.

Then autumn time came, and the leaves on the trees turned gold, brown, and red coloured. After a time they fell off the trees, and made

a pretty carpet of leaves.

In Elm Town the tall trees began to look very bare. Then came the winter. The wind blew and the rain fell fast. There were no rooks in the nests now. At night all were sleeping in warm cosy spots near.

Then after many days, February came once more. The rooks came to look at their nests. Some had blown down. Others had only a few sticks left.



THE ROOKS CAME TO LOOK AT THEIR NESTS

Then everyone in Elm Town was busy once more. They mended their old nests, or made new ones.

Strongwing made a new nest, at the top of

the tallest elm tree. Everybody was glad, for they all said, "Strongwing is our leader now."

That year everybody in Elm Town was happy. But the new farmer was not so happy. His seeds had not grown well.

So he blamed the fields, and said that the soil was no good for growing things.

Then after a long time, he made up his mind to go away. When the rooks

saw him go, they were all very glad. Then not long after, the old farmer came back. Strongwing was the first to see him. He had been flying about near the farm and watching.

Then to his great joy he saw the old farmer and his son come to the field. They began to plough it. Strongwing flew down behind them and picked up a few grubs. Then up into

the air he flew, back to the other rooks.

“Come . along,” he called. “It is quite safe now. The old farmer is back again. Hurry up, everybody. There are heaps of lovely grubs.”

When the rooks heard this, they all began to caw for joy. Then they flew to the field as fast as they could.

The old farmer stopped ploughing to watch them.

“Jim,” he said to his

son, "I am glad to be back on the old farm again. Just look at the rooks. They seem just as happy as I am."

That night in Elm Town there was such a lot of talking. Everybody was happy to know that they could go once more to their old fields.

The people in the big house said:

"Listen to the rooks! What a noise they are making! They seem to

be very happy this evening. I believe they know that the old farmer is back again."

If Mr. Hurst had been able to understand what the rooks were saying, he would have heard:

"Good news, good news! The good, kind farmer has come back. We can all go back again to our own fields. Strongwing told us that we could. Strongwing is our brave leader.

Everybody in Elm Town
is happy. Three loud
cheers for Strongwing!”



